

By Michael Roknick
[The Sharon Herald](#)

(Shenango Valley, PA) — Holding a mock-up of the front page of The Herald's May 17, 2007 edition, Mickey Bolt said little explanation was needed.

That day's paper had a photo showing the destruction of Wheatland Tube Co.'s Sharon pipe plant. Employing 265 at the plant when it closed earlier that year, the company blamed the shuttering on surging Chinese pipe imports.

"Our time is running out," said Bolt, a 31-year Wheatland Tube steelworker who has been lobbying the halls of Congress for trade relief.

At a news conference Monday at Wheatland Tube's pipe and tube plant in Wheatland, Bolt was on hand to support a trade measure by U.S. Reps. Jason Altmire, McCandless, D-4th District, and Phil English, Erie, R-3rd District.

Called "The Supporting America's Manufacturers Act," the measure would allow congressional review of trade cases where the president decided whether to slap trade sanctions on imports.

Both congressmen said they are taking the action due to the Bush administration rejecting every recommendation by the U.S. International Trade Commission on cases where it called for trade sanctions. Three years ago, the ITC ruled that Chinese pipe imports were hurting American companies such as Wheatland Tube. President Bush rejected the ruling and refused to impose trade sanctions, which resulted in the Sharon plant closing.

"Three years ago, the administration turned their back on a vital sector of the American manufacturing base by failing to give breathing room to pipe and tube producers struggling to survive an onslaught of surging Chinese pipe," English said. "It is obvious that current law failed this industry despite overwhelming support by the International Trade Commission for relief."

Under the proposed measure, Congress could overrule the president by a majority vote in the House and Senate. A sitting president would not be able to veto congressional action.

"For the past eight years, the president has unilaterally refused to follow the recommendations of the International Trade Commission and grant American manufacturers the assistance they need to remain strong in the face of a surge of Chinese imports," Altmire said.

"Giving Congress a say in deciding whether or not to follow the ITC's recommendations will help to ensure manufacturers are not unfairly denied assistance on the basis of ideology alone."

